

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 110376

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TO AMEMBASSY KABUL

S E C R E T STATE 110376

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 110376 ACTION JERUSALEM ANKARA ISLAMABAD
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S E C R E T STATE 110376

TOSEC 1013, ZFF JERUSALEM ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CENTO

SUBJECT: THE PAKISTANIS AT THE CENTO MINISTERIAL

1. DURING CENTO MINISTERIAL PAKS COMMENTED EXTENSIVELY ON
FOUR ISSUES: 1) CENTO'S SECURITY ROLE; 2) SOVIET BEHAVIOR
AND INTENTIONS IN THE SUB-CONTINENT AND MIDDLE EAST;
3) US MILITARY SUPPLY POLICY; AND 4) THE INDIAN NUCLEAR
EXPLOSION.

2. CENTO'S SECURITY ROLE

AZIZ AHMED WAS VERY CRITICAL OF CENTO'S FAILURE TO PROTECT
PAKISTAN AGAINST THE ONLY REAL THREAT TO IT -- INDIA. HE
SAID CENTO HAD ACCOMPLISHED NOTHING IN ITS 19 YEARS OF
EXISTENCE AND HAD SAT IDLY BY WHILE PAKISTAN WAS CUT IN TWO.
HE SAID THAT THERE NEVER HAS BEEN AND THERE IS NOT NOW A
DANGER THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD UNDERTAKE DIRECT AGGRESSION

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 110376

AGAINST ONE OF THE CENTO REGIONAL COUNTRIES OR THREATEN

AGGRESSION. RATHER, THE DANGER COMES FROM SOVIET MILITARY SUPPORT TO IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN AND PARTICULARLY TO INDIA AND THIS IS WHAT CENTO SHOULD CONCERN ITSELF WITH. INDIA, HE MAINTAINED, WAS COOPERATING WITH THE SOVIETS BOTH IN IRAQ AND IN AFGHANISTAN BY PROVIDING MILITARY TRAINING TO OFFICERS FROM BOTH COUNTRIES.

BUT, IN SPITE OF THE SCORN FOR CENTO HE EXPRESSED, AZIZ

AHMED GAVE NO HINT OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A PAK WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ORGANIZATION.

3. THE SOVIETS, DETENTE AND ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY SYSTEM

HE SAID THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN PRESSING THE PAKS, THUS FAR UNSUCCESSFULLY, TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY SYSTEM. HOWEVER, THE GOP ANTICIPATES THAT THE SOVIETS WILL CONTINUE TO EXERT PRESSURE ON IT TO JOIN. WHILE PAKISTAN IS DETERMINED TO RESIST THESE PRESSURES, THE THREAT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY SERIOUS. IN SPITE OF THIS, THE GOP SEES NO EVIDENCE THAT THE US AND UK ARE PREPARED TO COUNTER SOVIET ACTIONS.

THE CENTO COUNCIL ENGAGED IN A BRIEF AND GENERAL EXCHANGE ON THE MEANING OF DETENTE IN WHICH ALL AGREED WITH THE GENERAL PROPOSITION THAT DETENTE WAS INDIVISIBLE. BUT WHILE UK FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN SUGGESTED THAT DETENTE WOULD NARROW SOVIET OPTIONS OUTSIDE EUROPE, AZIZ AHMED ARGUED THAT THE EVIDENCE INDICATED THE CONTRARY WAS TRUE. DETENTE HAS NOT PREVENTED FURTHER SOVIET PENETRATION OF IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN AND INDIA; IN FACT, PROCESS HAS BEEN ACCELERATED. AT WHAT POINT, HE ASKED RHETORICALLY, DOES ONE SAY TO THE SOVIETS THUS FAR AND NO FURTHER.

4. MILITARY SUPPLY

AHMED REITERATED THE GOP COMPLAINT THAT INDIA CONTINUES TO RECEIVE MILITARY SUPPORT FROM THE SOVIET UNION WHILE PAKISTAN RECEIVES NOTHING FROM THE UNITED STATES. AL-
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 110376

THOUGH CHINA IS PROVIDING SOME ASSISTANCE TO PAKISTAN, IT IS NOT IN A POSITION TO SPARE SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT. AND, ALTHOUGH PAKISTAN HAS BEEN PURCHASING SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT FROM FRANCE, THE FRENCH ARE PROFITING FROM THE REALIZATION THAT THEY ARE IN A MONOPOLY SUPPLIER POSITION; THEY ARE DRIVING HARD BARGAINS WITH PAYMENT IN CASH.

5. THE INDIAN ATOMIC EXPLOSION

AHMED PUT A GREAT DEAL OF EMPHASIS ON INDIA'S EXPLOSION OF A NUCLEAR DEVICE. HE SAID THAT INDIA WAS SPENDING HUGE AMOUNTS ON ARMS AND HAD EXPLODED THE BOMB EVEN THOUGH SHE IS STARVING. THE PAKISTANIS SOUGHT TO INCORPORATE THREE ELEMENTS IN THE COMMUNIQUE: 1) AN INDICTMENT OF THE INDIAN ACTION; 2) AN INTERPRETATION WHICH WOULD HAVE REPRESENTED IT AS CAUSING A SET BACK TO NORMALIZATION AND PEACE EFFORTS IN SOUTH ASIA; 3) AND AN ASSURANCE OF SECURITY FOR SMALLER COUNTRIES AGAINST NUCLEAR THREAT. NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID THAT PAKISTAN WOULD NOT ABANDON ITS EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A RECONCILIATION WITH INDIA. HOWEVER, TURKEY, IRAN, THE UK AND US SUGGESTED THAT WHILE THE EVENT WAS CAUSE FOR SOBER REFLECTION, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE ANALYZED CAREFULLY BEFORE ITS IMPLICATIONS COULD BE FULLY EVALUATED. BOTH THE US AND UK INDICATED THAT, IN DOING THEIR ASSESSMENTS OF THE INDIAN EXPLOSION, THEY WOULD TAKE CAREFULLY INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY AHMED. AHMED ARGUED TENACIOUSLY FOR MORE CRITICAL LANGUAGE THAN THAT WHICH APPEARED IN THE COMMUNIQUE BUT HE EVENTUALLY YIELDED TO THE CONSENSUS AMONG THE OTHER FOUR COUNTRIES.

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